

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 26BOSTON GLOBE
13 May 1987

Hoffman, Liddy debate CIA college recruitment

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The crowd shot to its feet and exploded into a raucous chorus of cheers and catcalls as the two combatants strolled to their seats in the auditorium.

In one corner sat Abbie Hoffman, 60's radical who 20 years later still embodies a spirit of social protest and civil disobedience.

In the other corner was G. Gordon Liddy, a former aide to President Richard M. Nixon, who slipped into prominence during the Watergate scandal as one of the men behind the infamous break-in, wiretapping and conspiracy in 1972.

Hoffman and Liddy the yippie and the watergate functionary, shared the same stage at North-eastern University last night to debate recruitment on college campuses by the Central Intelligence Agency. A more disparate pair would have been difficult to find.

"Recruitment is a privilege, it is not a right," said Hoffman. "It is a business practice . . . there are many universities in this country that don't consider themselves extensions of the business community."

Said Liddy, many students "may want to join the Peace Corps, that's their right." Others may have the aptitude, the ability and desire to serve their country by working for the CIA . . . "and that certainly ought to be their right."

About 500 students paid the \$2 admission charge to hear the joust between the two. In terms of political philosophies, the audience ap-

peared split in their allegiances. There were cheers and boos for both men.

Hoffman, fresh from his arrest and acquittal for demonstrating against on-campus CIA recruiters at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, spoke first. He took a slap at the CIA's record of covert campaigns, illegal acts, and secretive nature to depict the agency as a powerful, yet virtually lawless organization.

"Our country has the right to protect its interests . . . it [CIA] does not have the right to lie to Congress, to misinform people, to lead secret covert policies," Hoffman said.

"The CIA is the most powerful agency in government. It has the ability to get us into war and if we don't stop it, it will get us into war in Central America," he added.

For his part, the trim and slightly bald Liddy, defended the CIA as a hedge against domestic turmoil, intrusion by the Soviet Union and eventually war.

The organization, he said, "may be the only thing between you continuing your studies or being drafted into the armed services and having to go to war."